

(c) Various sub-programmes being implemented under SIDE-NLDP, the present term of which is upto March, 2002, have already been finalized. Since all the funds available under the programme have already been committed, launching of any new Scheme is not being considered at present.

Assistance to Coffee Growers

1715. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether coffee prices have crashed and coffee planters are in difficulty;

(b) the details of Government's plan to assist the coffee planters to come out of this difficulty;

(c) whether any financial assistance, marketing package, etc. have been worked out to tide over these difficulties; and

(d) if so, the details of schemes started therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI DIGVUAY SINGH): (a) In the recent times, due to surplus coffee production on the part of the producing countries has led to a mismatch between demand and supply and hence the prices of coffee both in global and domestic markets have been witnessing a downward trend.

(b) to (d) The Government of India, through Coffee Board, besides operating several plan schemes and developmental activities aimed at intensive cultivation, quality upgradation and water augmentation, has also been providing necessary support in the form of research, extension, arrangement of credit and finance and other back up support like supply of seed for planting purposes etc. Further thrust is being given for increasing productivity of coffee particularly in the small grower sector and improving quality of the product to achieve competitiveness in the international markets. The Board is also encouraging the large growers to produce speciality coffees which fetches attractive premiums in developed countries like USA and European Union.

Recently at the behest of the Government of India, the Reserve Bank of India/NABARD have issued instructions to commercial and cooperative banks to reschedule the crop loans of coffee growers and also to extend fresh working capital loans to coffee sector as a relief to the growers. The Board has also prepared a medium term export strategy to gain market share in key markets

[7 August, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

and initiated steps to evolve an integrated strategy to improve domestic consumption of coffee.

Closure of large engineering units

1716. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to large amount of imports of machinery/machine parts/engineering goods, manufacturing industry is in very bad shape in India;

(b) if so, the action propose to take to stop sickness in this industry;

(c) the amount of money of the banks locked in engineering industry for the last three years;

(d) the number of large engineering units closed down for the last three years; and

(e) the number of skilled/unskilled lost jobs because of the closure of these units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) No, Sir. Imports of machinery during April-March 2000-01 have shown a decline of-10.76 per cent over the corresponding period of previous year. Item-wise details of improts of major engineering goods for the previous two years arc as below:

Imports (US \$ Million)

Items	1999-2000	2000OI	Growth (%)
Machine Tools Machinery	261.47	218.27	-16.52
other than Electric Electrical	2744.97	2754.29	0.34
Machinery Transport	437.84	472.04	7.81
Equipment	1136.57	643.06	-43.40
Machinery (Total)	4580.85	4087.96	-10.76

The prevailing slowdown in the manufacturing sector, however, is due to slow growth in demand; infrastructure bottlenecks; and high input and funding costs.